

COMPREHENSION CHALLENGES

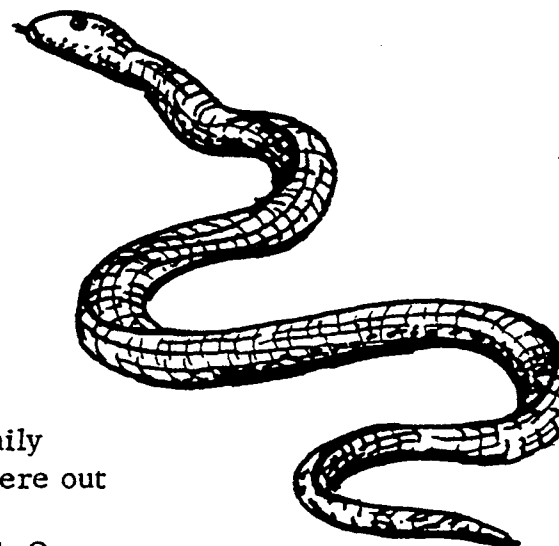
The path along the spring ditch led toward a spot that I knew would be covered with tender sprigs of water-cress. I was watching two birds playing in the balmy air above me.

Suddenly I stopped. I became aware of an unusual rustling sound all around me. Was it the wind rustling dry leaves? My eyes searched the blossom-laden trees of spring. This was not the source of the sound. I looked around in bewilderment. Then my eyes traveled down.

What a surprise, I realized that I had walked into a family of water snakes! Hibernation time was over. They, too, were out to enjoy the warm sunshine.

Dozens of snakes writhed on the ground around my feet! One basketball sized group of entwined snakes, playfully crawled in and out, over and under each other. I watched in awful fascination. The dried sound had been produced by snakes rubbing against each other.

Overwhelming desire not to be a part of that family gave propulsion to my frantic retreat. Springs on my feet could not have improved my speed nor the height of my leaps as each step was cushioned by the bodies of writhing, twisting, startled, harmless snakes!



1. This story is about:
 - (a) a snake family
 - (b) water-cress
 - (c) hibernation time
 - (d) jet propulsion.
2. The sound that the author heard was from:
 - (a) dry leaves
 - (b) bird wings
 - (c) field mice
 - (d) snake skins
3. The water snakes were:
 - (a) swimming in the ditch
 - (b) moving across the path
 - (c) coiled about each other
 - (d) shedding their skins
4. The number of snakes that the author saw was:
 - (a) a few
 - (b) dozens
 - (c) 2 buckets full
 - (d) seven
5. Before the author found the snakes, he was looking for:
 - (a) water-cress
 - (b) wild flowers
 - (c) leaves
 - (d) birds
6. Writhing means:
 - (a) writing
 - (b) twisting
 - (c) laying
 - (d) wiggling
7. From the story you can tell that the search was probably:
 - (a) a success
 - (b) too difficult
 - (c) a failure
 - (d) too long
8. From the story you can tell that the writer probably:
 - (a) liked snakes
 - (b) played with snakes
 - (c) had a pet snake
 - (d) feared snakes